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TO : S/S - Mr. Bremer

SUBJECT: Transition Papers

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Thanks
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BRIEFING PAPER

THE CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT IN EUROPE (CDE)

THE ISSUE

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Giscard first proposed the Conference on Disarmament in Europe (CDE) in general terms at the UN Special Session on Disarmament in 1978. CDE was conceived as a conference involving the 35 CSCE signatory states in two phases: a first phase to negotiate Confidence Building Measures (CBMs)*, to be followed by a second phase on reductions of armaments and associated manpower. Agreements would cover all of Europe, including Soviet territory "to the Urals".

The French proposal was initially seen in part as a Giscard election ploy -- Giscard has been under pressure from the left for the lack of a security policy -- and as a French attempt to put the themselves back into the European security business, capitalizing on growing interest among neutrals and smaller Allies for greater part in security discussions. The proposal quickly gained favor among countries which wanted a greater voice in European security. It also appealed to the FRG, which dislikes what it sees as a MBFR "special security zone" centered on Germany and therefore supported the wider, all-European focus of CDE. Moreover, with both SALT and MBFR moribund, the FRG and other key European governments have felt the need for active security discussions to defuse left-wing opposition to force enhancement efforts, like TNF and 3%.

Responding to the growing support for a CDE, the Soviets in late 1979 dusted off an all-European security conference proposal of their own, redubbed the "Conference on Military Detente and Disarmament in Europe" (CMDD). As announced in the Fall, 1979 Warsaw Pact Communique, CMDD resembled CDE by proposing a multi-stage process, beginning with 35-nation talks on CBMs and moving on to discussions of disarmament. But there are key differences:

-Agreements reached under the CMDD would be applicable only to the 250KM strip of Soviet territory covered under the maneuver notification CBM in the Helsinki Final Act.

-The French want mandatory CBMs, the Soviets only voluntary measures.

-The Soviets support and the French opposed eventual inclusion of nuclear issues.

*CBMs are non-reduction measures which require exchange of information on forces and military activities, invitation of observers to notified activities and possible limits on the size of military activities.

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In addition, the CMDD would consider "declaratory measures", viz. declarations on non-expansion of Alliances and non-first use of nuclear and conventional weapons.

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WHAT WE ARE DOING AND WHY

Recognizing the widespread support for 35-nation security talks, but also the potential hazards of the French approach, we have sought to remain uncommitted to the CDE while we worked with France and other Allies to craft a CDE mandate which would protect our interests. As the keystone to our policy, we told Allies we would only consider a post-Madrid meeting if it met a number of criteria. A CDE mandate would have to ensure that any post-Madrid meeting would be:

--firmly tied to CSCE as part of a "balanced" outcome at Madrid (we rejected the notion of a separate 35-nation security conference outside the CSCE context)

--limited to a discussion of militarily significant and verifiable CBMs applicable to the Urals (we wanted to rule out Soviet "declaratory measures" as well as a second phase CDE of 35 nation force reduction talks)

--designed so as not to interfere with MBFR

Another criterion was that the Madrid meeting itself would have to be "balanced". Post-Afghanistan, we added that the "international situation" should be a conditioning factor in any Alliance decision on CDE, without specifying precisely what we had in mind.

The French, wanting our support, have been accommodating: they eliminated all explicit references to a second phase CDE on force reductions, tied CDE more firmly to the CSCE process, and stated publicly that the wider area "to the Urals" was an absolute prerequisite to a CDE. In addition, they have worked with us in NATO on a package of 10 CBMs, among them a requirement for Soviets to tell us the identity and location of major military units and to notify movement of divisions "out of garrison" 30 days in advance. In sum, the draft CDE mandate now embodies a concept for a post-Madrid CBMs meeting which fulfills the substantive criteria we had given Allies.

In withholding support for a CDE, the US is isolated. All Allies and neutrals -- together, of course, with the Warsaw Pact -- support the idea of a conference; indeed, the

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Romanians, Austrians, Finns and Swedes are all working on variants of 35-nation security talks, and the Poles, Romanians and Swedes have already offered to host such a meeting.

[redacted]

TIME CONSTRAINTS

We have now told Allies that we will maintain our reserve on CDE until the new Administration takes office. This will correspond with detailed discussion of security new proposals at Madrid, which begins when Madrid reconvenes January 27. The issue facing the new Administration will be whether to join Allies in supporting the CDE, and opposing competing ideas like the CMDD, during this new proposals phase. A final decision on whether to approve a CDE cannot be delayed beyond early March, when the Madrid meeting is scheduled to adopt its final document, which will contain the mandate for a post-Madrid meeting if one is approved.

[redacted]